



City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3024724
Address:	1253 S. Jackson St.
Applicant:	Michelle Wang, Runber Architecture Group
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, May23 rd , 2017
Board Members Present:	Julian Weber (Chair) Charles Romero Carey Dagliano-Holms David Sauvion Sharon Khosla
Board Members Absent:	None
SDCI Staff Present:	David L. Landry, AICP, Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Downtown Mixed Residential/Commercial (DMR/C 65/65-85)

Nearby Zones: North – DMR/C 65/65-85
South – DMR/C 65/65-85
East – DMR/C 65/65-85
West - DMR/C 65/65-85

Overlay Districts: Chinatown-International District
Urban Center Village
Frequent Transit Service Area

Project Area: 12704 square feet (sq. ft.)



Current Development:

The proposal site is located on the south side of S. Jackson Street, one block west of Rainier Ave south in the Chinatown-International District. The site is currently occupied by a single-story masonry office building with a small parking lot built in 1983 and currently used as an emergency shelter operated by YouthCare, a not for profit outreach program for homeless youth and adults.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The proposal site is located within the Chinatown-International District and is within the Downtown Urban Center Village. The neighborhood includes Chinatown, Little Saigon located to the east of Interstate 5 and remnants of the historic Japantown located predominantly around 6th Avenue and Main Street. The area is culturally diverse with a large concentration of businesses owned by people of Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese descent. The boundaries of the district are roughly from 4th Avenue South, on the west to Rainier Avenue to the east and Yesler Way to the north to Charles Street/Dearborn to the south. The project site is located between 12 Ave S. and Rainier Ave S. Along this stretch of 12 Ave S. is a vast array of retail shops and offices located in both one and two –story buildings. Located at the southwest corner of S. Jackson and Rainier Ave S is a confluence of four major streets; Boren Ave S., S. Jackson, 14th Ave S. and Rainier Ave S, resulting in a distinctive 5-way intersection referred to as a gateway to the Yesler Terrace neighborhood to the northwest, First Hill to the north, North Beacon hill to the south, little Saigon to the southwest and the rest the International District and Pioneer to west. This area experiences high pedestrian traffic while this stretch of S. Jackson St. is the location of a light rail transit stop, various bus routes entering and leaving the downtown business corridor and designated bike lanes.

Access:

Primary access to the site is south off of S. Jackson from a west bound or east bound direction. Secondary access would be west off of Rainier Ave. S. onto S. King St. and then north along the improved section of an alley which then angles to the west reaching the rear or south side of the site. The unimproved portion of the alley continues northward and is directly adjacent to the projects sites eastern property boundary.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

The site is not located in an Environmentally Critical Area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a proposal to construct a seven-story, apartment building containing 70 units, 1,800 sq. ft. of retail and 8,000 sq. ft. of office space at ground level with parking for 17 vehicles provided within the structure. The existing structures to be demolished.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE May 23, 2017

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3024724) at the following website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx>

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at SDCI:

Mailing Address: Public Resource Center
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

At the EDG meeting, the following comments were provided:

- Suggested that the unimproved portion of the alley could be made to be more hospitable and designed to accommodate a night time market which is suitable for the character of the neighborhood.
- Would like the building to be set further away from the existing neighboring buildings, possibly making the building taller so that it could accommodate the same number of units.
- Suggested that Little Saigon has experienced the loss of right-of-way (R-O-W) over the years and that this neighborhood could benefit from reinforcing R-O-W's and through connections and whatever happens along the (alley) edge should be public.
- Supported the use of screens as seen in the images presented in the EDG packet and suggested that the screens are a nice way of expressing the character of the neighborhood.
- Suggested that the use of screens would help to unify the building façade, but found their suggested use to be in direct contrast to the applicant's stated desire of wanting to create different facades as seen in images presented in the EDG packet. The suggestion was for the applicant to one or other approach but not both.
- Suggested that the office space be located on the second floor in order to create deeper and or more retail spaces which would be great for the neighborhood.
- Questioned if the departure request was driven by the desire to avoid burying the power lines.
- Suggested bringing the vertical façade modulation down to the retail and eliminating the horizontal retail expression in order to make the retail look more individualized.
- Advised that the design avoid contrived busy-ness and pastiche as the challenge is to try to create something that looks like it has been developed over time.

- Suggested that this type of development needs to create smaller retail spaces to offset the higher rents as small businesses cannot afford to pay the high cost of rents.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

1. **Massing:** The Board supported the preferred massing of Option C and the arrangement of uses as being appropriate. The Board verbalized that the site is challenged in needing to be sensitive to many activities coming together at the gateway to Little Saigon. As a result, this project will become a very visible beacon due to its large mass and height at the east end of a major street at the gateway to many things coming together. Board members suggested that the design needs to be more responsive as a corner site to the gateway of Rainier, (Jackson, 14th). The Board found it interesting that the east facing units of the project were family oriented while the ones facing west are smaller units which feels disconnected. The Board also discussed that the horizontal band separating the residential from the commercial façade should be used and the vertical articulation of the building façade should be brought down through the commercial/ground floor façade as well. **(CS2-A-2, DC2-B-1, DC2-B-1)**
 - a. The Board wanted to see more of an enhanced residential entry and pedestrian interaction at the lobby. **(CS2-B-2, PL3-A-1, DC2-B-1)**
 - b. The Board suggested that there needs to be more retail space and less office on the ground floor level which would aid in activating the street. **(CS2-B-2, PL3-A-1)**
 - c. The Board suggested that some modulation along the other building façade is important and attention should be given to the other facades that do not face Jackson in the final design. **(CS2-A-2, DC2-B-1)**
2. **Cultural Relevance:** The Board appreciated the amount of effort that went into the cultural research of the neighborhood and how that was translated into the building massing with the residential units being placed above the commercial space that will be divided into narrow bays, reflecting the small-scale character of the existing retail along S. Jackson St. The Board also agreed with public comment and felt that the precedent images were relevant and exciting to see but cautioned that they would like to see more cohesion in the massing as a whole. **(CS2-A-1, CS2-A-2, CS3-B-1, CS3-B-2)**
3. **Ground Level Activity:** The Board agreed with public comment that there should be more retail space, with smaller spaces (and less office uses) to help activate and reinforce the commercial street character and pedestrian activity. The Board indicated support for moving the housing office to the second floor as a way of creating more commercial floor space and as a means of further activating the street right-of-ways. The Board acknowledged that this could create challenges and asked if the office could somehow be further broken down into more micro type of retail which better fits the character of the

neighborhood. The Board supported the placement of retail at the southwest corner as depicted in Massing Option C connecting to the strong commercial corridor of the neighborhood. The Board also supported placing the retail at the on the east corner as depicted in Option A to reinforce this as a leading and more visible corner. **(DC2-C, PL3-C-3, DC3-A-1)**

4. **Right-of-Way:** The Board supported the public comment to further explore the use of the public right-of-way and create more public open space. The Board acknowledged that the alleys in terms of access, cleanliness, and safety will be challenging and these issues should confronted directly. The Board encouraged the applicant to open up the alley and (internal spaces) toward the eastern alley as a catalyst for future opportunities for development along the ROW. The uses, spaces and design will dictate how the alley will be used over time. **(CS2-A-2, CS2-B-2, CS2-B-3, PL3-A-2, PL3-C-3, DC3-A-1)**

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departure was identified:

1. **Facade Setback Limits SMC 23.49.162.B.1.b(2):** The Code requires setback limits for property line facades for the following setback limits shall apply to certain streets designated on (S. Jackson St. per Map 1H as requiring property line facades: Structures greater than fifteen (15) feet in height shall be governed by the following standards:

Between the elevations of fifteen (15) and thirty-five (35) feet above sidewalk grade, the facade shall be located within two (2) feet of the street property line, except that:

- The maximum setback shall be ten (10) feet.
- The total area of a facade that is set back more than two (2) feet from the street property line shall not exceed forty (40) percent of the total facade area between the elevations of fifteen (15) and thirty-five (35) feet.
- No setback deeper than two (2) feet shall be wider than twenty (20) feet, measured parallel to the street property line.
- The facade of the structure shall return to within two (2) feet of the street property line between each setback area for a minimum of ten (10) feet. Balcony railings and other nonstructural features or walls shall not be considered the facade of the structure.

The applicant is asking for a departure to allow for a building façade setback ranging from 4 to 7 feet between the elevations of 15 and 35 feet above the sidewalk along the S. Jackson St. elevation. The reasoning behind the request includes the need to avoid the overhead high voltage utility lines located along S. Jackson where the City requires a 14 foot setback from the nearest conductor which is equivalent to a 4 foot setback from the property line. The departure would also aid in reducing the perceived mass of the building structure aiding in creating a similar small scale retail commercial level similar to the existing retail core along S. Jackson. The result would be small setbacks aligned with the 14'-6" wide

residential bays over the commercial retail space. The maximum proposed setback of 7 feet is less than the maximum allowed setback of 10 feet.

The applicant is also proposing that the street-level commercial façade, which is setback 1 foot from the property line, extend to a height of 23 feet above the sidewalk so as to create a screen wall. This would increase the perceived height of the commercial base and provide additional privacy for the Level 2 units facing S Jackson St.

The Board indicated preliminary support for this departure request as they felt the departure would aid in further enhancing the articulation of the building façade.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

CONTEXT & SITE

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-A. LOCATION IN THE CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD

CS2-A-1. Sense of Place: Emphasize attributes that give Seattle, the neighborhood, and/or the site its distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established. Examples of neighborhood and/or site features that contributed to a sense of place include patterns of streets or blocks, slopes, sites with prominent visibility, relationships to bodies of water or significant trees, natural areas, open spaces, iconic buildings or transportation junctions, and land seen as a gateway to the community.

CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence: Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly. A site may lend itself to a “high-profile” design with significant presence and individual identity, or may be better suited to a simpler but quality design that contributes to the block as a whole. Buildings that contribute to a strong street edge, especially at the first three floors, are particularly important to the creation of a quality public realm that invites social interaction and economic activity. Encourage all building facades to incorporate design detail, articulation and quality materials.

CS2-B. ADJACENT SITES, STREETS, AND OPEN SPACES

CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and carefully consider how the building will interact with the public realm. Consider the qualities and character of the streetscape— its physical features (sidewalk, parking, landscape strip, street trees, travel lanes, and other amenities) and its function (major retail street or quieter residential street)—in siting and designing the building.

CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space: Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces. Evaluate adjacent sites, streetscapes, trees and vegetation, and open spaces for how they function as the walls and floor of outdoor spaces or “rooms” for public use. Determine how best to support those spaces through project siting and design (e.g. using mature trees to frame views of architecture or other prominent features).

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-B. LOCAL HISTORY AND CULTURE

CS3-B-1. Placemaking: Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.

CS3-B-2. Historical/Cultural References: Reuse existing structures on the site where feasible as a means of incorporating historical or cultural elements into the new project.

PUBLIC LIFE

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-A ENTRIES

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street. Scale and detail them to function well for their anticipated use and also to fit with the building of which they are a part, differentiating residential and commercial entries with design features and amenities specific to each.

- a. Office/commercial lobbies should be visually connected to the street through the primary entry and sized to accommodate the range and volume of foot traffic anticipated;
- b. Retail entries should include adequate space for several patrons to enter and exit simultaneously, preferably under cover from weather.
- c. Common entries to multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors. Design features emphasizing the entry as a semi-private space are recommended and may be accomplished through signage, low walls and/or landscaping, a recessed entry area, and other detailing that signals a break from the public sidewalk.
- d. Individual entries to ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry. The design should contribute to a sense of identity, opportunity for personalization, offer privacy, and emphasize personal safety and security for building occupants.

PL3-A-2 Ensemble of Elements: Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features. Consider a range of elements such as:

- a. overhead shelter: canopies, porches, building extensions;

- b. transitional spaces: stoops, courtyards, stairways, portals, arcades, pocket gardens, decks;

PL3-C RETAIL EDGES

PL3-C-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-C-2. Visibility: Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend. **PL4 Active Transportation:** Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-B. ARCHITECTURAL AND FAÇADE COMPOSITION

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs—considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned through the placement and detailing of all elements, including bays, fenestration, and materials, and any patterns created by their arrangement. On sites that abut an alley, design the alley façade and its connection to the street carefully. At a minimum, consider wrapping the treatment of the street-facing façade around the alley corner of the building

DC2-B-2. Blank Walls: Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians. These may include:

- a. newsstands, ticket booths and flower shops (even if small or narrow);
- b. green walls, landscaped areas or raised planters;
- c. wall setbacks or other indentations;
- d. display windows; trellises or other secondary elements;
- e. art as appropriate to area zoning and uses; and/or terraces and landscaping where retaining walls above eye level are avoidable.

DC2-C. SECONDARY ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas). Detailing may include features such as distinctive door and window hardware, projecting

window sills, ornamental tile or metal, and other high-quality surface materials and finishes.

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the design of the building so that each complements the other.

DC3-A. BUILDING-OPEN SPACE RELATIONSHIP

DC3-A-1 Interior/Exterior Fit: Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.